

DISCONTINUANCE OF CERTAIN GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

FEBRUARY 3, 1925.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. KIESS, from the Committee on Printing, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 3633]

The Committee on Printing, to whom was referred the bill (S. 3633) to amend the printing act approved January 12, 1895, by discontinuing the printing of certain Government publications, and for other purposes, has considered the same and reports favorably thereon with the recommendation that the bill do pass.

The object of this bill is to correct certain practices which were prolific of great abuse and wasteful extravagance in the expenditure of the public money without a corresponding benefit to anyone, and to perpetuate by permanent legislation certain measures of economy that have been adopted by the Joint Committee on Printing under authority of the legislative appropriation act for 1920 (40 Stat. 1270), approved March 1, 1919.

PURCHASE OF PAPER

Section 1: The purpose of this section is to amend the present law which provides that advertisements for sealed proposals to furnish the Government with paper shall be printed in two newspapers published in each of the following cities: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Louisville, Omaha, Denver, San Francisco, and Chicago.

The committee is of the opinion that these advertisements should appear in paper trade publications; therefore, definite locations should not be named in the law. This procedure will enable the Joint Committee on Printing to advertise in cities known as paper centers. It is not considered necessary to advertise in more than one publication in the same locality.

OFFICIAL REGISTER

Section 2: This section will repeal the law which requires the Director of the Census to biennially assemble and prepare all data necessary for the publication of the Official Register, which will again be necessary on June 30, 1925.

The Joint Committee on Printing on July 21, 1923, exercised its authority under the law to remedy waste in public printing and binding by directing the Public Printer to temporarily discontinue the printing of the Official Register. The cost of printing this publication amounted to more than \$26,000 for each edition, while the expense for collecting and assembling the data amounted to \$15,000, making biennially a total cost of \$41,000. It will be noted that the effect of the order of the Joint Committee on Printing has already resulted in a saving of \$26,000, and that by enacting this section into law an additional \$15,000 will be saved.

The Secretary of Commerce wrote the committee, under date of June 14, 1923, as follows:

The department is required by the present law to collect the entire data for the Official Register. The assembling of this information costs the Bureau of the Census about \$9,000, and the preparation of data in the various departments entails a further expenditure of between five and six thousand dollars. If under these circumstances we should discontinue the volume, the Government would be in a position of expending about \$15,000 for the collection of data which would be stored temporarily in the Bureau of the Census and would ultimately be destroyed, as it would soon be out of date. And while this department feels that the Official Register should be discontinued and is in full accord with this legislation I do not feel that it would be a business like arrangement, under the present circumstances, for the department to collect all this information as it is required to do by law and then not to print it.

The Official Register has not been printed for nearly four years. As no complaints on account of its discontinuance, so far as known, have been received, it is submitted this fact is the best evidence that its usefulness does not justify the cost of printing.

The United States Civil Service Commission, under date of June 19, 1923, states that—

The weakness of the Official Register lies in the fact that it is not complete; that its list of personnel is true and accurate only upon one day in each two years. Before the Official Register becomes available for distribution it is, to a considerable extent, obsolete.

NAVY YEARBOOK

Section 3: This section proposes to repeal the law providing for the preparation, editing, and printing of the Navy Yearbook. This publication was discontinued by order of the Joint Committee on Printing under date of July 21, 1923, and this action was approved by the chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, the Director of the Budget, and the Secretary of the Navy.

In addition to the cost of compiling the Navy Yearbook, the expense of printing, which amounted to approximately \$8,000 per annum, will be eliminated if above section is enacted into law.

Under date of June 12, 1923, the Director of the Budget wrote the Joint Committee as follows:

I have your letter of May 29 in which you ask for my views and recommendations as to whether the Navy Yearbook serves purposes sufficiently useful or necessary to justify the cost of its preparation and printing.

I have carefully considered this matter and it appears that practically all of the tables and other data contained in the Navy Yearbook are published in the annual reports of the Secretary of the Navy and the Paymaster General of the Navy or other department publications. Within the past few months there has been published and distributed a compilation of Navy laws entitled "The Laws Relating to the Navy, Annotated," which covers all laws pertaining to the Navy enacted up to and including March 4, 1921. It would certainly seem to be unnecessary again to cover this same field in another publication. Further, I am advised that the Navy Yearbook serves little, if any, useful purpose so far as the Navy Department is concerned.

It is my opinion that the Navy Yearbook serves no purposes sufficiently useful or necessary to justify the cost of its preparation and printing.

DEPARTMENTAL PUBLICATIONS

Section 4: Section 89 of the printing act of 1895 provides that no "report, publication, or document shall be printed in excess of the number of 1,000 of each in any fiscal year without authorization by Congress." In view of the fact that the Budget Bureau carefully scrutinizes all appropriations for printing and binding and that Congress has recently enacted a statute requiring that all appropriations for printing and binding shall be in one item, the committee is of the opinion, inasmuch as all executive departments, independent offices, and establishments of the Government have a specific appropriation in one item for printing and binding, that they should not be limited as to the number of copies they may order for official distribution.

ABRIDGMENT OF MESSAGES AND DOCUMENTS

Section 5: It is proposed to repeal the act requiring the compilation, preparation, and printing of the publication entitled "Abridgment of Messages and Documents." The law requires that messages of the President shall be printed in pamphlet form when received by Congress. Your committee is of the opinion that to reprint and bind these messages in one volume is wholly unnecessary and constitutes a waste in public printing and binding.

The Secretary of the Treasury, under date of April 26, 1919, advised the Joint Committee on Printing as follows:

The most extensive duplication that has come within the observation of the Treasury Department is that contained in the publication known as the "Abridgment of Documents"—a congressional document. It embraces extensive extracts from annual reports of the executive departments which have been issued and distributed prior to its completion. It is believed that it could be largely reduced or even discontinued with but slight inconvenience to the Government or the public.

The Public Printer states that the cost of printing this publication, covering a period of approximately 10 years, was from \$3,000 to \$8,000 annually.

PRINTING OF ANNUAL REPORTS

Section 6: This section proposes to enact into law a provision which is now annually reenacted in the legislative appropriation

bill; if adopted, it will obviate the necessity of enacting this legislation each year. The section leaves it optional with the heads of the various departments, independent offices, and establishments of the Government as to whether any annual or special reports under their respective jurisdiction shall be printed.

CONCLUSION

The Joint Committee on Printing has given the proposed legislation most painstaking consideration and earnestly recommends the passage of this bill. The facts set forth in this report seem to your committee to make it most urgent that the passage of this bill be accomplished at the present session of Congress in order that a saving of more than \$40,000 annually may become effective by permanent legislation.